RFA - STRENGTHENING THE NGO SECTOR
POSTED: 01-27-03
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USAID/DCHA/PVC
M/OP-03-467
Set of Q & A #1 –(See Amendment 1 - Posted 2-12-03)
Set of Q & A #2 - Posted: 3-5-03
Set of Q & A #3 - Posted: 3-12-03

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SET OF Q & A #4 - POSTED: 3-18-03

Note: All questions and responses are for clarification purposes only and are not incorporated into the RFA "Strengthening the NGO Sector"

Under Annex D "USAID Mission Addresses", delete all references to "Pennsylvania Ave, NE" and replace with "Pennsylvania Ave, NW".

1) Question: Cash Match

• Can the money that subgrantees and partners invest in the project activities count towards the cash match requirement?

Response:

Funds that subgrantees and partners invest in the project activities may count towards the cash match requirement if federal requirements for cost share are met.

• Can funds used as loan capital in a microfinance sector strengthening program be applied towards the match?

Response:

Yes.

• Is the 30% match requirement 30% of the total project budget or 30% of USAID grant funds?

Response:

The 30% match is derived by taking the 30% against the total program cost for example, if the total program cost is $100,000, then the 30% non federal contribution would be $30,000. A 30% non federal contribution derived by taking 30% of federal funding (USAID) reveals a reduced commitment to the program, for example, 30% of the non federal contribution of $70,000 is only $21,000 for a total program cost of $91,000. The match must be taken from the total program cost.

2) Question: Budget

• For a multi-country application, is the applicant expected to allocate budget resources equally among those countries?

Response:

No. The budget allocations are expected to be country and program specific.

- What should we use for overhead & fringe in the budget if we don't have a NICRA?

Response:

Until a NICRA is established use direct costs. The RFA, Section II "Grant Application Instructions", Part C "Cost Application Format, paragraph 7 provides information to the applicant that does not have a NICRA.

- Section C, "Cost Application Format," paragraph 1 requires the submission of the budget and narrative using SF 424 and 424A. Please clarify that the budget application must include a line-item budget and narrative, broken down by four major budget categories (program, procurement, training and indirect costs), in addition to the SF 424 and 424A. Should the same major budget categories in rows one through 4 in section A of SF 424A, under the first column, "Grant Program Function or Activity," be listed?

Response:

Applicants must provide a breakdown of the four line item totals along with the corresponding narrative in addition to the SF 424 and 424A. Regarding the SF 424A Section A, the four major categories may be listed under the first column entitled "Grant Program Function or Activity".

- In the "General Instructions" for SF424A, "Sections A,B,C and D should include budget estimates for the whole project except when applying for assistance which requries Federal authorization in annual or other funding period increments. In the latter case, Sections A, B, C and D should provide the budget for the first budget period (usually a year) and Section E should present the need for Federal assistance in the subsequent budget periods." Kindly confirm which of these two funding situations applies to us.

Response:

The budget estimates are for the whole project.

3) Question: Gender

To what extent should gender be considered in the application?

Response:
Please refer to the RFA Section II "Grant Application Instructions", Part B (3) f

4) Question: Presence and Non-Presence Countries

What is meant by "presence" in one of the Annex C countries. We are US based, but have established programs in several countries. Does presence mean, an office, a team of volunteers, an active program in progress, etc?

Response: In the RFA the use of "presence" and "non-presence" refers to whether a USAID Mission is present in the country. A number of the countries on the eligible country list do not have a USAID Mission, hence the use of the term "non-presence" in reference to those countries.

5) Question: Registration

- Eligibility requirements state that the applicant must be a registered PVO. If my organization is not registered does this eliminate my institution's eligibility?

- What is the process of becoming a PVO registered with USAID?

Response:

Section I of the RFA, part B provides specific eligibility requirements. PVC's website: http://www.usaid.gov/hum_response/pvc/ provides registration information.

6) Question: Life of Project

The RFA indicates that projects may have a 5 year time line. Is this duration necessary for all projects or can an application for a shorter period of performance; for example, three and a half years be submitted?

Response: All applications are expected to be for five years.

7) Question: Spacing

Is the document expected to be single spaced?

Response:

The application may be single or double spaced so long as the maximum allowable pages are not exceeded.

8) Question: WARP

Is there a minimum number of WARP countries that will be considered regional, or is it 'the more countries the better'?

Response:

Applications that are submitted for WARP are expected to demonstrate regional impact. The number of countries would depend on the applicant's program design. The RFA didn't specify the number for that reason. Please refer also to the questions and answers that were posted March 5, 2003.

9) Questions: Procurement

Page 6 of RFA M/OP-03-467, item 2 lists the programs that PVC cannot finance. Included on the list is: "Construction or commodity procurement." 1. If office space can be rented to house a field office, but is in need of renovation, does the renovation constitute "construction," which would be prohibited? 2. What is meant by "commodity procurement?" Does the procurement of equipment such as computers, office furniture and vehicles fall under the "commodity procurement" prohibition?

Response:
1. The intent of USAID's RFA for Strengthening the NGO Sector is to foster programmatic objectives; not to expend program funds on building renovations. Requests to fund renovations are rare, however, if proposed, renovations have been included under the match portion of the budget. 2. Commodity procurement is defined as any material, article, supply, goods or equipment with a unit cost in excess of $5,000. Please refer to CFR 228.01 **and** CFR 228. 51 for more information regarding cost share.

10) Question: Personnel

- Under "Key Personnel" are resumes for key personnel required? If some of these positions are to be hired, How should an applicant handle a key position that is to be hired? Also on this subject, must key personnel be devoted to the project 100%?

Response:
If some key personnel have not been hired then applicants may submit the job descriptions not the resumes of potential candidates. The RFA's Section II "Grant Application Instructions", Part B (4) provides information regarding Program Management. Each applicant must make a determination of level of effort required by each specialist in order to meet its programmatic objectives.

- In regard to the Organigram for the NGO Strengthening RFA, should the chart contain countries and staff relevant only to the NGO Strengthening program or should it contain all of the organizations country programs?

Response:

Include personnel that are relevant to the proposed program.

11) Question: Intermediate Results

Question: The RFA gives two internmediate results (see section D-1 on pg. 7) USAID expects/wants that those IRs be the IRs for the projects under development---in other words, should we copy those exact IRs for our project, or can/should we adapt them to our specific project?

Response:
The applicant's proposed Program Description is its expression, interpretation or understanding of the technical issues as presented in the RFA.

12) Question: Project Start Date

According to the application timeline, cooperative agreements will be issued in September, 2003. Is it expected that projects should have as their start date September 2003, or by a certain date?

Response:

The effective date of the award governs when any costs associated with program work can be incurred. The award's effective date is the date the Agreement Officer signs the award document. These awards can only be made based upon availability of funds; however, USAID intends to have all awards issued by September 30, 2003.

13) Question: Performance Monitoring, Planning Matrix, Workplan

- Is it acceptable to have one overarching planning matrix that the countries in the region are working towards, and then workplans by country when there may be a regional design that involves several countries in the region in a unified effort?

Response:

An overarching planning matrix as described in the question above may be responsive to the RFA's requirements.

- In the RFA it says to include a "..workplan with milestones and benchmarks identified, see Annex F "Sample Work Plan". However, the sample just shows Activities and a timeline.   Can we just follow the sample?

Response:

Yes.

- Is there a specific Performance and Financial Monitoring/Measurement and Evaluation Plan format required?

Response:

No. The RFA does not specify a required format.

- Are the Workplan and the Planning Matrix to be included in the body of the proposal or as attachments?

Response:

- Both the workplan and the planning matrix should be included in the body of the proposal. As noted in the RFA Technical Application Guidelines, both the planning matrix and the workplan are included in the section on Program Management Approach.

Strengthening NGO Sectors RFA Questions and Answers
M/OP-03-467